

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
EASTERN DIVISION**

BRIAN BONNER,

Plaintiff,

v.

**Civil Action 2:19-cv-4495
Judge Sarah D. Morrison
Magistrate Judge Chelsey M. Vascura**

JOHN AND JANE DOES, *et al.*,

Defendants.

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

This matter is before the United States Magistrate Judge for a Report and Recommendation on the Court's December 20, 2019 Show Cause Order. (ECF No. 5.) For the reasons that follow, it is **RECOMMENDED** that Plaintiff's action be **DISMISSED WITHOUT PREJUDICE** pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for failure to prosecute.

Plaintiff filed this action on October 4, 2019. (ECF No. 1.) Plaintiff's handwritten complaint was illegible, and Plaintiff subsequently requested that the Clerk mail a copy of his Complaint back to him (because he did not retain a copy after filing) so he could re-type it legibly. (ECF No. 2.) Plaintiff's request was granted, and he was ordered on November 14, 2019 to file his Amended Complaint no later than December 14, 2019. (Order 1–2, ECF No. 4.) Plaintiff was further ordered to either pay the Court's \$400 filing fee or file a renewed request for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* no later than December 14, 2019. (*Id.*)

When Plaintiff failed to comply with the Court's November 14, 2019 Order, he was ordered on December 20, 2019 to show cause within 30 days why this case should not be

dismissed for want of prosecution unless Plaintiff filed his legible Amended Complaint, and either paid the filing fee or filed a renewed motion for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis*, in the interim. (ECF No. 5.)

To date, Plaintiff has failed to comply with the Court's November 14, 2019 and December 20, 2019 Orders. He has neither paid the filing fee nor submitted proper documentation showing that he is unable to pay the fee. Nor has he submitted a legible Amended Complaint. Under the circumstances presented in the instant case, the Undersigned recommends dismissal of Plaintiff's action pursuant to Rule 41(b). The Court's inherent authority to dismiss a plaintiff's action with prejudice because of his failure to prosecute is expressly recognized in Rule 41(b), which provides in pertinent part: "If the plaintiff fails to prosecute or to comply with these rules or a court order, a defendant may move to dismiss the action or any claim against it. Unless the dismissal order states otherwise, a dismissal under this subdivision (b) . . . operates as an adjudication on the merits." Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b); *Link v. Walbash R.R. Co.*, 370 U.S. 626, 629–31 (1962). "This measure is available to the district court as a tool to effect 'management of its docket and avoidance of unnecessary burdens on the tax-supported courts [and] opposing parties.'" *Knoll v. AT & T*, 176 F.3d 359, 363 (6th Cir. 1999) (internal citations omitted).

The Sixth Circuit directs the district courts to consider the following four factors in deciding whether to dismiss an action for failure to prosecute under Rule 41(b):

(1) whether the party's failure is due to willfulness, bad faith, or fault; (2) whether the adversary was prejudiced by the dismissed party's conduct; (3) whether the dismissed party was warned that failure to cooperate could lead to dismissal; and (4) whether less drastic sanctions were imposed or considered before dismissal was ordered.

Schafer v. City of Defiance Police Dep't, 529 F.3d 731, 737 (6th Cir. 2008) (citing *Knoll*, 176 F.3d at 363). "Although typically none of the factors is outcome dispositive, . . . a case is

properly dismissed by the district court where there is a clear record of delay or contumacious conduct.’’ *Schafer*, 529 F.3d at 737 (quoting *Knoll*, 176 F.3d at 363).

Here, Plaintiff failed to comply with the Court’s Orders instructing him to submit a legible copy of his Complaint and to either pay the \$400 filing fee or file a renewed application for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis*. (See ECF Nos. 4–5.) Moreover, the Court explicitly cautioned Plaintiff in the December 20, 2019 Order (ECF No. 5) that failure to comply or respond to the Show Cause Order would result in dismissal of this action for failure to prosecute pursuant to Rule 41(b). *See Stough v. Mayville Cmty. Schs.*, 138 F.3d 612, 615 (6th Cir. 1998) (noting that “[p]rior notice, or the lack thereof, is . . . a key consideration” in whether dismissal under rule 41(b) is appropriate). Plaintiff’s failure to timely comply with the clear orders of the Court, which established a reasonable deadline for compliance, constitutes bad faith or contumacious conduct. *See Steward v. Cty. of Jackson, Tenn.*, 8 F. App’x 294, 296 (6th Cir. 2001) (concluding that a plaintiff’s failure to comply with a court’s order “constitute[d] bad faith or contumacious conduct and justify[d] dismissal”). Because Plaintiff has missed this deadline and disregarded the Court’s orders, the Undersigned concludes that no alternative sanction would protect the integrity of the pretrial process. Nevertheless, the Undersigned concludes that dismissal with prejudice and requiring Plaintiff to pay the filing fee is too harsh a result.

It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that the Court **DISMISS THIS ACTION WITHOUT PREJUDICE** under Rule 41(b). It is further **RECOMMENDED** that the Court not assess the filing fee in this matter. Finally, it is **RECOMMENDED** that the Court order Plaintiff to list 2:19-cv-4495 as a related case if he re-files this action.

PROCEDURE ON OBJECTIONS

If any party objects to this Report and Recommendation, that party may, within fourteen (14) days of the date of this Report, file and serve on all parties written objections to those specific proposed findings or recommendations to which objection is made, together with supporting authority for the objection(s). A Judge of this Court shall make a *de novo* determination of those portions of the Report or specified proposed findings or recommendations to which objection is made. Upon proper objections, a Judge of this Court may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the findings or recommendations made herein, may receive further evidence or may recommit this matter to the Magistrate Judge with instructions. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

The parties are specifically advised that failure to object to the Report and Recommendation will result in a waiver of the right to have the District Judge review the Report and Recommendation *de novo*, and also operates as a waiver of the right to appeal the decision of the District Court adopting the Report and Recommendation. *See Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *United States v. Walters*, 638 F.2d 947 (6th Cir. 1981).

/s/ Chelsey M. Vascura
CHELSEY M. VASCURA
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE